



Montgomery County Council

From the office of Councilmember Derick Berlage

News Advisory

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Statement by Councilmember Derick Berlage on his decision not to seek re-election to the Council

I'm here to announce that after much reflection, consultation, and – to be honest – a certain amount of agonizing, I have decided not to seek re-election to the County Council.

It has been an enormous privilege to serve this county for 12 years. It's been the chance of a lifetime. Nonetheless, I have decided that it's time to consider new challenges, time to spend more time with my children, and time to step aside in favor of new blood.

I leave secure in the knowledge that, with the help of my constituents, I have accomplished what I set out to accomplish.

When I first ran for office in 1990, I promised to make the protection of the environment a top priority. My very first bill, the Forest Conservation Act, has saved tens of thousands of acres of trees. My stream protection initiative has protected our most pristine wetlands, begun to reverse the decline in water quality in our more urban stream valleys, and helped create the first stable source of funding for stormwater management.

I promised that the schools of southeastern Montgomery County would be second to none. And so we built a brand new, state of the art Blair High School at Four Corners, completely modernized Einstein H.S. and most of our elementary schools, and expanded all day kindergarten.

During my first campaign, I complained relentlessly that the Silver Spring area had less parkland per capita than any other section of the county. I will leave the Council knowing that eight new parks were created in my district during my tenure.

Finally, I also said that we would do whatever it takes to turn around downtown Silver Spring. And we did not give up, did not give out and did not give in, until we got
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the kind of revitalization that would make us proud of our downtown again. Today it's happening, happening at the new Discovery headquarters, the American Film Institute, Fresh Fields, Roundhouse Theater, Montgomery College, and many other sites.

So it's fair to say the past 12 years have been good ones for my community, and for our entire county. The credit goes not to me, but to my constituents, who make up a community second to none in the world. The credit goes especially to my many supporters, to my staff who served me so well, to my colleagues, and to my family who put up with all the late nights and crazy calls. To all of them, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. And I know that together we'll have a few more victories before I leave office.

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